

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Federal Agency Name: Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2008 Assessment and Watershed Protection Program Grants (AWPPGs)

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.480

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-08-03

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by EPA (see Section VII of this RFP) by **4:00**

P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) April 22, 2008, or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EDT April 22, 2008**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **April 10, 2008**, and written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/funding/rfp.html>.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

SUMMARY: The goals of this announcement include supporting a watershed approach to better address water quality problems in the U.S. and building the capacity of watershed stakeholders to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for watershed protection, restoration, and management. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting proposals from eligible applicants under two National Priorities: (1) Watershed/Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) National Priority and (2) Nonpoint Source National Priority.

The Watershed/TMDL National Priority focuses on projects that advance the science of TMDL development and watershed management through the provision of technical training/information transfer, and enhancement of TMDL production efficiencies. The specific project topic areas under the Watershed/TMDL National Priority include: Assessment and TMDL Workshops; Tools, Incentives, and Products Training for the Watershed Approach; and Tools, Incentives, and Trainings that Foster the Financing of Water Quality Protection and/or Habitat Restoration/Protection Activities on a Watershed Scale. The Nonpoint Source National Priority focuses on enhancing lake water quality through innovative outreach projects, educational materials, curriculum design, and awareness programs. The specific project topic area under the Nonpoint Source National Priority is Technical Support, Conferences, and/or Workshops to Promote Clean Lakes.

These activities are tied to Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2; Protect Water Quality, Sub-Objective 2.2.1; Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>), which includes restoring and maintaining watersheds and their aquatic ecosystems and oceans in order to protect human health, support economic and recreational activities, and provide healthy habitat for fish, plants, and wildlife.

States and local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, territories and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), interstate agencies or intertribal consortia, public or private non-profit, non-governmental institutions, and individuals are eligible to apply. This announcement describes the selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Assessment and Watershed Protection Program Grants (AWPPGs). Funding for assistance agreements awarded under this RFP is provided under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The total amount of expected funding available under this announcement is approximately \$500,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that five to eight awards will be made under this Request for Proposals (RFP).

EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards in a specific project topic area, or change the ratio of the Watershed/TMDL National Priority awards to the Nonpoint Source National Priority awards. Such a change may be necessary as a response to the quality of the proposals received, the size of the awards to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND

EPA encourages the adoption of a watershed approach as a broad coordinating process for focusing on priority water resource problems. Using a watershed approach, multiple stakeholders integrate regional and locally-led activities with local, state, tribal, and federal environmental management programs. Implementing the watershed approach should ultimately protect and restore the health of the nation's aquatic resources, which not only includes, but goes beyond meeting water quality standards. Information on the watershed approach can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/approach.html>.

This announcement is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to build the capacity of watershed stakeholders to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for watershed protection, restoration, and management. EPA is accepting proposals from eligible applicants to propose projects under one of the two National Priorities: (1) Watershed/ TMDL National Priority and (2) Nonpoint Source National Priority.

The Watershed/TMDL National Priority focuses on projects that advance the science of TMDL development and watershed management through the provision of technical training/information transfer, and enhancement of TMDL production efficiencies. The specific project topic areas under this National Priority include: Assessment and TMDL Workshops; Tools, Incentives, and Products Training for the Watershed Approach; and Tools, Incentives, and Trainings that Foster the Financing of Water Quality Protection and/or Habitat Restoration/Protection Activities on a Watershed Scale.

The Nonpoint Source National Priority focuses on enhancing lake water quality through innovative outreach projects, educational materials, curriculum design, and awareness programs. The specific project topic area under this National Priority is Technical Support, Conferences,

and/or Workshops to Promote Clean Lakes.

The statutory authority for AWPPGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and it is encouraged that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out specific task(s), rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

All projects funded through AWPPGs must contribute to the overall development and implementation of the watershed approach. AWPPG funds may not be used solely for the operational support of specific watershed projects (e.g., support for the implementation of individual watershed projects, the development of TMDLs for specific waterbodies, or for in-depth monitoring for individual waterbodies).

B. NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Proposals to fund projects under this announcement must address only the specific project topic areas listed under the two National Priorities identified below: (1) Watershed/TMDL National Priority and (2) Nonpoint Source National Priority. ***Note: While applicants may submit more than one complete proposal package under this announcement, each complete proposal package must address only one specific project topic area.***

1. Watershed/TMDL National Priority

The Watershed/TMDL National Priority focuses on advancing the science of TMDL development and watershed management through technical training, technology transfer, and enhancement of TMDL production efficiencies. It is anticipated that approximately \$300,000 is available to fund an estimated four to seven projects to support this national priority. EPA anticipates that typical awards for the selected projects will range from \$30,000 to \$125,000. EPA is soliciting proposals for the following specific project topic areas under this National Priority: (a) Assessment and TMDL Workshops; (b) Tools, Incentives, and Products Training for the Watershed Approach; and, (c) Tools, Incentives, and Trainings that Foster the Financing of Water Quality Protection and/or Habitat Restoration/Protection Activities on a Watershed Scale.

a. Assessment and TMDL Workshops

EPA is soliciting proposals for projects that provide logistical and technical support for the delivery of workshops to build the capacity of state, local, regional, and tribal officials to support achievement of assessment and TMDL program strategic objectives. The goal of these workshops is to build on lessons learned and advance TMDL development nationally to foster implementation through innovation, adaptive watershed management, and cooperative conservation.

The workshops should address technical, scientific, and programmatic issues covering various elements of TMDL development including water quality assessment, modeling, nonpoint source loading, stormwater and other wet weather sources, and other pollutant-specific TMDL developmental and implementation issues. The target audience is expected to include state, local, regional, and tribal officials, stakeholders, and national experts. It is anticipated that recipients would develop agendas and provide participants with materials. Possible workshop topics/sessions include the following:

- Listing approaches;
- Development of successful or innovative TMDLs (including third-party TMDLs);
- Integration of monitoring, water quality standards, and/or permit programs;
- Training on TMDL applications and watershed planning for agriculture-related water quality impairment;
- Involvement of local watershed organization expertise;
- Planning for program implementation activities; and
- Alternatives to TMDLs (including analysis of potential impairment types, innovative approaches to meeting water quality standards in a reasonable period of time, and cost benefit information).

The workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation. EPA anticipates funding one to two assistance agreements (each with a planned one to two-year project period) under this specific project topic area for a total available funding of approximately \$100,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s).

b. Tools, Incentives, and Products Training for the Watershed Approach

EPA is soliciting proposals for training, demonstrations, award programs/other incentives, and dissemination of existing tools, products, and information that support integrative watershed planning to improve water quality, including source water protection. The target audience is expected to include states, tribes, local governments, and watershed practitioners. Trainings and demonstrations do not need to be stand alone, but can be held in conjunction with other trainings, demonstrations, workshops, or similar events already planned by other organizations. Potential projects include trainings, workshops, or demonstrations that are focused on existing tools, incentives and products that:

- Assist in identifying, assessing, and prioritizing water quality problems in watersheds;
- Assist in appropriate applications of water quality modeling, and landscape analysis and monitoring techniques;
- Provide decision support systems, including tracking and other databases, for interaction with and between these tools in an integrated manner;
- Develop a compendium of best management practices, including specific case studies, for a broad agricultural community; and
- Expand the audience for, and recognition of, effective water quality improvement activities (e.g., an award program/other incentives for water quality trading, best management practices in agriculture, etc.).

EPA anticipates funding two to three assistance agreements (each with a planned one to two-year

project period) under this specific project topic area for a total available funding level of approximately \$125,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s).

c. Tools, Incentives, and Trainings that Foster the Financing of Water Quality Protection and/or Habitat Restoration/Protection Activities on a Watershed Scale

EPA is soliciting proposals for projects that will assist states, tribes, local governments, and/or watershed practitioners to develop and implement approaches that finance water quality protection and/or habitat restoration and protection activities on a watershed scale. Because water quality and habitat impairments do not conform to political jurisdictions, proposals should demonstrate how the project will facilitate approaches that finance water quality and habitat restoration and protection efforts according to watershed boundaries and the ecosystems within them. Proposals should outline how the proposed project will foster the following:

- (1) Access to sustainable revenue streams such as fees, taxes, and debt;
- (2) Effective mechanisms for linking revenue streams to watershed needs, such as enterprise funds; and
- (3) Institutional capacity to effectively manage the financial resources, such as regional authorities, basin-wide commissions, and/or agreements among local governments.

Potential projects include trainings, demonstrations, and dissemination of tools and information that may, for example:

- Assist the target audience identify, assess, and prioritize potential watershed finance approaches;
- Assist the target audience to demonstrate watershed finance approaches;
- Develop compendiums of best watershed finance management practices, including specific case studies, for the target audience; and
- Expand the audience for, and recognition of, effective watershed finance approaches (e.g., an award program/other incentives for entities that develop innovative watershed finance approaches).

The target audience is expected to include states, tribes, local governments, and/or watershed practitioners. Trainings and demonstrations do not need to be stand alone events, but can be held in conjunction with other trainings, demonstrations, workshops or similar events already planned by other organizations.

EPA anticipates funding one or two assistance agreements (each with a planned one to two-year project period) under this specific project topic area for a total available funding level of approximately \$75,000 depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s).

2. Nonpoint Source National Priority

The Nonpoint Source National Priority focuses on enhancing lake water quality through innovative outreach projects, educational materials, curriculum design, and awareness programs. It is anticipated that approximately \$180,000 is available to fund one project to support this National Priority.

a. Technical Support, Conferences, and/or Workshops to Promote Clean Lakes

EPA is soliciting proposals to help promote knowledge and understanding of lake management, including document development, meetings, national lake monitoring assessments, and other activities related to the protection and restoration of lakes. The goal is to improve the public's appreciation for the value of lakes and understanding of lakes issues and problems, and increase citizen involvement in volunteer monitoring for lakes. Potential projects that could benefit state lake managers, lake associations and others include:

- Conferences and/or workshops to present state-of-the-art information related to lakes restoration and protection activities. Conferences and/or workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation;
- Support for a national lake monitoring assessment;
- Support for special issues of lakes-related magazines on key lakes issues;
- Development of educational school programs on lakes; and
- Support for a handbook on lake volunteer monitoring methods.

EPA anticipates incrementally funding one assistance agreement for up to a three-year project period, for a total of approximately \$180,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project.

C. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The goals of the AWPPGs include supporting a watershed approach to better address water quality problems in the U.S. and building the capacity of all levels of government to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for watershed protection, restoration, and management. These priorities support Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water; Objective 2.2 Protect Water Quality; Sub-Objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>), which includes restoring and maintaining watersheds.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goals of clean and safe water.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative, but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Workshops on innovative assessment and modeling methodologies for TMDL development;
- New tools and products for assisting states, tribes, local governments, and stakeholders in learning about best management practices;
- Conferences and/or workshops to promote training, coordination, and acceleration of lakes restoration and protection; and

- Tools, incentives, and trainings to assist watershed organizations implement financing approaches for water quality protection and/or habitat restoration/protection activities on a watershed scale.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- An increased number of impaired waterbodies that have been partially or fully restored to meet water quality standards or other established water quality-based goals based on implementation of innovative alternative financing techniques, tools, or practices;
- An increased number of waterbodies that are protected through development of restoration plans, watershed plans, or TMDLs for waters not meeting water quality standards;
- An increased awareness of watershed management principles or techniques that enhance the ability of practitioners and decision-makers to effect environmental change either directly or through institutional changes; and
- An increased awareness and utilization of water quality financing techniques to influence environmental change and implement solutions to water quality problems on a watershed scale.

As part of the Proposal Narrative, an applicant should describe how the project will result in the protection of environmental resources and link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

D. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement is CWA Section 104(b)(3). CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of assistance agreements to the following activities: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

EPA expects approximately \$500,000 to be available under this announcement to fund approximately five to eight projects. EPA anticipates that awards for the selected projects will range from \$30,000 to \$180,000, depending on the amount requested, the specific project topic

area, and the overall size and need for the project. Except as specifically indicated, for certain National Priority areas in Section I.B, it is anticipated that the assistance agreements funded under this announcement will have one to two-year project periods.

B. FUNDING TYPE

It is anticipated that grants or cooperative agreements will be funded under this solicitation. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for projects selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
3. In accordance with the applicable regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31, review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
5. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement(s) (the final decision on the content of these reports rests with the recipient).

C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards in a specific project topic area, or change the ratio of the Watershed/TMDL National Priority awards to the Nonpoint Source National Priority awards. Such a change may be necessary as a response to the quality of the proposals received, the size of the awards to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no award as a result of this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

D. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is

accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made

to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States and local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, territories and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), interstate agencies or intertribal consortia, public or private non-profit, non-governmental institutions, and individuals are eligible to apply. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA Section 502 as “an agency of two or more States established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more States, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.” Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. (NOTE: You can reference CFR Title 40 online at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/cfr40.htm>.)

Non-profit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in OMB Circular A-122, now at 2 CFR Part 230. Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority which establishes their status.

B. COST-SHARING OR MATCHING

No cost-share/match is required under this announcement. However, projects with voluntary cost-share/match are encouraged and will be evaluated accordingly under the Section V.A “Project Leveraging” criterion. Cost-shares/matches can be in the form of cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23, as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. The cost-share/match must be for allowable project costs. Cost-share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Section IV.G of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost-share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost-shares/matches without specific statutory authority.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements which if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement.

Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. Except as stated below, proposals must **substantially comply** with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the Proposal Narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced Proposal Narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 page double spaced page limit for the Proposal Narrative specified in Section IV.C.2; excess pages will not be reviewed (Section IV.C.2 establishes a 10 page double spaced Proposal Narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of 5 single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of 5 will not be reviewed).
3. Proposals must be for projects that improve water quality by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and it is encouraged that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.
4. All projects must contribute to the overall development and improvement of watershed programs. Funds may not be used solely for the operational support of specific watershed projects, for the development of TMDLs for specific waterbodies, or for in-depth monitoring of individual waterbodies.
5. Applicants may submit more than one complete proposal package (including Proposal Narrative, SF 424 and SF 424A, supporting materials, etc.) under this announcement. **However, each complete proposal package must address only one specific project topic area under one of the National Priorities listed in Section I.B** (i.e., Assessment and TMDL Workshops; Tools, Incentives, and Products Training for the Watershed Approach; Tools, Incentives, and Trainings that Foster the Financing of Water Quality Protection and/or Habitat Restoration/Protection Activities on a Watershed Scale; or Technical Support, Conferences, and/or Workshops to Promote Clean Lakes). The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority (Watershed/TMDL National Priority or Nonpoint Source National Priority), as well as the specific project topic area addressed.

6. Proposals must be received by the EPA or received through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Tim Icke as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
7. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division (GIAMD) at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option of submitting their proposal packages (as described in Section IV.C below) in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website; or 2) by hard copy (with CD) to the EPA contact identified in Section IV.B.2 via hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. All proposal packages must be prepared, and include the information as described in Section IV.C below, regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their proposals electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency.

The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the proposal process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and

click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left side of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package” to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version ([Adobe Reader applications are](#) available to download for free on the Grants.gov website. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the [Help section](#) on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp).** Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the proposal package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OWOW-08-03**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.480), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the proposal package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Proposal Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EDT April 22, 2008**.

Please submit all of the proposal materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to <http://www.epa.gov/owow/funding/rfp.html> or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

How to submit your proposal through Grants.gov

Applicants are required to submit the following documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov. All documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

- For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare this as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your application (such as letters of support or annotated resumes), you may click “add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

- The following 2 additional documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.
 1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 2. SF 424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- For each document, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY08 – “AWPPG Proposal” – 1st Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – “AWPPG Proposal” – 2nd Submission.” Once your proposal has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the proposal package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Tim Icke at 1-202-566-1211 or email at awppg@epa.gov. If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Tim Icke as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package and an electronic version on a CD, as described in IV.C below are required to be submitted by hand delivery, express mail service, or courier service. Electronic files on the CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or

Microsoft Word (.doc). Maps, letters of support, and annotated resumes must be submitted electronically as part of the CD, scanning of these items is acceptable. **Proposals submitted by U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**

The address for hard copy submission is:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7313E
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
Attn: Tim Icke

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely. All proposal packages, regardless of how submitted, must include the following three documents described below:

1. **Signed Standard Form (SF) 424** - Application for Federal Assistance
2. **SF 424A** - Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
3. **Proposal Narrative**

NOTE: The Proposal Narrative must be limited to no more than 10 typewritten double spaced 8.5 x 11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 10 page limit (not including cover page) will not be considered. Hard copy submissions may be submitted double-sided. If a single-spaced proposal narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 page double-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed (the 10 page double-spaced proposal narrative page limit would be the equivalent of 5 single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of 5 will not be reviewed). In addition, supporting materials (such as maps, letters of support, and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit.

The Proposal Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Proposal Narrative.

1. Cover Page (Not included in the page limit):
 - a. Project title;
 - b. National Priority Area as well as the specific project topic area from Section I.B addressed in the proposal (**a proposal must address only one specific project topic area**);
 - c. Name of applicant;
 - d. Number of proposals applicant is submitting (i.e., Proposal Number 1 of 2, or Proposal Number 1 of 1);
 - e. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);

- f. Proposed Geographic Location (as appropriate): Provide the proposed project's 8 digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) as defined by the USGS 8 digit HUCs (if the proposal is placed-based project);
 - g. Total project cost and federal dollars requested; and
 - h. Executive Summary (recommended 150 words or less): Provide a brief summary of the proposal. This should include a brief description of the perceived need for the work, the proposed project, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
2. Project description containing:
- a) **National Priority/Specific Project Topic Area:** Describe how the proposal addresses one of the specific project topic areas under one of the National Priorities described in Section I.B of this announcement. Applicants must address only one specific project topic area per complete proposal package.
 - b) **Environmental Results:**
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the project and describe the linkage to EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 - Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2 - Protect Water Quality, Sub-objective 2.2.1 - Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis (see Section I.C of this announcement);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the workplan activities (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of this program/project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the program/project resulted in environmental improvement (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C); and
 - iv. Measuring Progress - Describe a plan for measuring and tracking the progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes.
 - c) **Quality Assurance /Quality Control:** If the applicant expects to collect data and information, briefly describe how applicant will assure and control data quality. If this is not applicable to the project, state so in the Proposal Narrative. Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment. The cost of QAPP development should be included in the project budget.
 - d) **Broad Support:**
 - i. Partnerships - Describe your ability to support strong and collaborative partnerships and document effective working relationships among state, tribal, local entities, and broad-based community involvement. List proposed partner entities, their roles, and whether they will participate as subgrantees. Include documentation of partnerships through letters of support. All letters must be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization. (Letters of support are not included in the page limit.)

- ii. **Leveraging** - Describe the project's potential to leverage EPA funding with the voluntary cost-share/match and how EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project carried out by the applicant with the voluntary cost-share/match resources. Note: Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for the voluntary cost-share/match and the voluntary cost-share/match must be included in the SF 424A and the Detailed Budget Narrative.
- e) **Transfer of Results:** Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to states, tribes, local governments, watershed practitioners, and the general public.
- f) **Project Tasks:** Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. Include a description of the staff roles and responsibilities in carrying out the project's tasks.
- g) **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a projected timeline for the proposed project period. The timeline should show timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.
- h) **Detailed Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in SF 424A such as "other" and "contractual". All subgrant funding should be located under the "other" cost category.
 - i. Total costs must include federal and any voluntary cost-share/matching (non-federal) components. Identify any cost-share/match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend any necessary meetings throughout the proposed project period. Total costs must distinguish between federal and any voluntary, cost-share/matching components.
 - ii. When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.
- i) **Programmatic Capability:**
 - i. **Organizational Experience** - Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.

- ii. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a brief description of project management and staff expertise/qualifications. Describe the proposed management structure for the project. List key staff and describe their expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.
(Annotated resumes are preferred, but not necessary, and are not included in the page limit.)
- j) **Programmatic Past Performance:** Submit a list of federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last 3 years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from Agency files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.
- k) **Environmental Results Past Performance:** Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last 3 years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from Agency files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.

The applicant should also provide in its Proposal Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy (with CD) must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII by **4:00 P.M. EDT April 22, 2008**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT April 22, 2008**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their proposal/application as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals/applications or portions of proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

G. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circulars: A-87 (States and local governments), A-122 (nonprofit organizations), or A-21 (universities). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, assistance agreements, or contracts). Funds cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

EPA has chosen to declare certain projects or activities ineligible for funding. The construction of buildings, the purchase of major equipment, and the payment of taxes for landowners will not be funded under this program. For the purpose of this RFP, "major equipment" is defined as an article of property of a durable nature that normally may be expected to have a period of service of a year or more after being put into use and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$10,000. Examples may include, but are not limited to vehicles, boats, motor homes, office furniture, construction equipment such as backhoes, fork-lifts, and trash booms and compaction systems. Note that the leasing of equipment may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) National Priority/Specific Project Topic Area (25 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal addresses one of the specific project topic areas under one of the National Priorities described in Section I.B of this announcement. (25 points)
2) Proposal Narrative and Budget Elements (15 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following: a) Clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks. (5 points) b) A description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project components/tasks. (5 points) c) Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Total costs must include both federal and any voluntary cost-share/match (non-federal) components. (5 points)
3) Environmental Results (15 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the following sub-criterion: a) Environmental Results: The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (5 points) b) Measuring Progress: The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes are provided in Section I.C of the announcement). (10 points)
4) Transfer of Results (10 Points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates a clear strategy for transferring the results and/or methods to states, tribes, local governments, watershed practitioners, and the general public. (10 points)
5) Broad Support (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate: a) Partnerships: Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the applicant's ability to support and substantiate strong collaborative partnerships and document effective working relationships among state, tribal, local entities, and broad-based community involvement. (5 points) b) Leveraging: Proposals will be evaluated based on the demonstration of a voluntary cost-share/match and how EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project carried out by the applicant with the voluntary cost-share/match resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for cost-share/match if the standards at 40 CFR

	30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for cost-share/match. Other federal grants may not be used cost-share/match without specific statutory authority. (5 points)
6) Programmatic Capability (Experience/Qualifications) (10 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (5 points) b) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)
7) Past Performance (15 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Applicant's past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performance within the last 3 years. (5 points) b) Applicant's history of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (5 points) c) Extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on its progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) performed within the last 3 years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points) <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under these factors, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history will receive neutral scores for these factors (i.e., 2.5 points).</p>

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a ranking list of the proposals for each specific project topic area based on the scores received. The ranking list for each specific project topic area will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account geographic distribution of funds.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10) that will be due 21 calendar days after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the complete application will be provided at that time.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate, and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Workplan commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A listing of selected projects will be posted on EPA's website address (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/funding/rfp.html>) once the awards have been made. This website will also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications (www.grants.gov) will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 45 (Training Assistance). A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative

agreement will be included in the final agreement.

C. DISPUTE PROCESS

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact in Section VII.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

E. DUNS NUMBER

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

F. COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

G. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, and 40 CFR part 45.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to

respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact before **April 10, 2008**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/funding/rfp.html>.

Agency Contact:

Tim Icke

E-mail: awppg@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) AND STORET

QA/QC requirements are applicable to these assistance agreements (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature.

Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Additionally, recipients of grants for projects that involve ambient monitoring will be required to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval) database. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET can be made via the new Water Quality Exchange (WQX). WQX is based upon the Environmental Sampling, Analysis, and Results (ESAR) standard, which defines a standard format for sharing monitoring and analytical data. More information about WQX and STORET can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/storet>. More information about ESAR can be found at <http://www.envdatastandards.net/section/standards/approved/>. Submitting data through WQX is done via EPA's Central Data Exchange, and leverages the Exchange Network (which is a State/Tribal/Federal data exchange partnership). These tools provide common internet protocols for sharing information. More information about CDX and the Exchange Network can be found at: <http://exchangenetwork.net>. Grantees should manage their data in a STORET compatible format that will facilitate the sharing of data via WQX.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of assistance agreements under this announcement will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final work plan.

C. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.

D. COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.